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Heart Echoes



MARION BLAIN DODGE



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Heart Echoes



By

Marjorie Elaine Porter

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To My Friends

Preface

*If you stand in an open valley
And call, then from far away
Your voice comes back in an echo,
As if mocked by a mimicking fay.*

*For beyond is a mystic power,
In the depths of the hills somewhere,
That catches the voice and returns it,
Echoing back through the air.*

*So the heart, like the open valley,
When the voice of emotion is strong,
Catches the strains of feeling,
And echoes the thought in song.*

Two Little Sparks

*Two little sparks on Christmas night
Out of the yule-log flew,
They gazed around in great delight,
And wondered what to do.*

*Up to a chair then softly went
Two little sparks so gay,
Each winked an eye as on mischief bent
They climbed the chair in play.*

*Up in the chair sat a great, big man,
His face was cruel and cold,
But the two sparks—do you think they ran,
Those little sparks so bold?*

*“Now come,” said one, “we’d better start—
And well that we start soon—
To melt the ice that is ’round his heart,
We can give no greater boon.”*

*Into a heart all cold and sere
Jumped the two sparks so warm,
“Oh!” said one, “but it’s cold in here,
Be quick, give the alarm.”*

Out of the yule-log glowing bright,
The sparks came by the score,
They rapped and rapped with all their might,
And knocked at the cold heart's door.

And two sparks on the inner side
Pulled 'till the door gave 'way,
Into the heart then, flushed with pride,
Rushed all the sparks so gay.

They warmed the heart to its very core,
And then when all were through,
Bright little sparklets by the score,
Back to the fire flew.

Now, in the chair sat a great, big man
Whose face was soft and kind,
He said, "I will help all I can,
Whoever I may find!"

Two little sparks on Christmas night,
Lay in their glowing bed,
Those little sparks so warm and bright,
And this is what they said:

*"Here's to the log, the Christmas yule,
Whose flames melt ice and snow,
Here's to us sparks, for 'tis our rule
To set cold hearts aglow!"*



To My Friends

*There are many threatening clouds,
There are many bitter tears,
That come gathering in crowds,
Down the vistas of our years.*

*There are many heavy loads
We must bend our backs to bear,
There are rough and stony roads,
There are yokes we chafe to wear.*

*There are many heart-wrung sighs,
There are many nights of pain,
When we watch with weary eyes
For the day to come again.*

*But the clouds aren't half so dark,
And a broken heart will mend
If enkindled by the spark
That God made, and men call "friend."*

*And the burden loses weight,
You can take a firmer stand,
If those sisters we call "Fate,"
Let you grasp a friendly hand.*

*For your sigh won't be so deep
When the day comes to an end,
And you'll smiling fall asleep—
If you're sure you have a friend.*

Snow Angels

*Silently, stealthily,
Down through the night,
Glide little snow spirits
In garments white.*

*Whirling and twirling,
They dance in the air,
Down to the dreary earth
Out of the — Where?*

*Where do you come from
O flowers of snow?
In gardens above
Do you blossom and grow?*

*Come you from Heaven,
You wee, fluffy things?
Are you feathers that fall
From the seraphim's wings?*

*Are you down from the couches
Where cherubim lie?
Tell me your secret
You folk of the sky.*

*Hark! do I dream it?
Or actually hear
The voices of snow-flakes
Abuzz in my ear:*

*"We are wee angels,
Our Father is God,
He sent us to cover
The hard, barren sod.*

*He sent us to shelter
The flowers below,
With a warm fleecy blanket,
'Till spring bids them grow.*

*He sent us to hasten
The birds on their way,
To warn them of winter
And not to delay.*

*To ye, doubting mortals,
We come from above,
To show that the Father
Has infinite love.*

*For if to the flowers
And the birds He is true,
Then trust, in your sorrow,
He'll not forget you."*

*Little snow-spirits
That dance in the air,
I've learned your sweet lesson,
And this is my prayer:*

*Little snow-angels
That glide through the night,
Come, cover my garments
With vestments of white.*

*You've taught me to trust
In my Father above,
And I, too, would be clothed
In the robe of His love.*

The Victor

*If I asked you your fondest ambition,
I can tell you just what you would say,
"To accomplish a wonderful mission,
To be a victor, a hero, someday."*

*Perhaps like Napoleon or Caesar
You would conquer the world with your sword,
And your name on the tablets of history
'Mid the famous, would be your reward.*

*Perhaps as an orator gifted,
You would win a great cause for your state,
And in life's long procession
March in the ranks of the great.*

*But the strongest and noblest of victors,
Who doth neither slaughter nor rant,
Is the man with the will made of iron
Who conquers the two words, "I can't."*

Success

*If you have not the gift of a Homer,
Nor a voice like a siren of old,
If you cannot paint your conceptions,
Nor like Midas turn dross into gold;
But if you are kind to your comrades,
And help them on life's rocky road,
If you change someone's sighs into laughter,
Or lighten a weary man's load,
Though your laurels may not be many,
And your harvests from life be less,
If you've founded the Kingdom of Kindness
You've won the crown of success.*

A Little Old Bundle of Letters

*There's a little old trunk in the attic
That's laden with treasures of yore,
Sweet by-gones and has-beens of yesteryear,
Now added to memory's store.*

*There's a little old bundle of letters
That lies in it, hidden away,
Guarding the secrets of yesteryear,
From the bustling, gruff today.*

*In that little old bundle of letters,
Tied with a ribbon of blue,
Is the story of grandmother's wooing,
Of a love that was pure and true.*

*And I think, as I handle them fondly,
And dream of that far-off day,
If those letters a tongue could be given,
I wonder if this they would say:*

*"Just a little old bundle of letters,
Tied with a ribbon of blue,
Now, faded, forgotten old relics,
But once, we were precious and new.*

Say, where are the lovers who knew us,
Where, where are those hearts so true?
And where is the dear hand that trembled
When it tied this old ribbon of blue?

Have they gone, gone away then forever,
Far off to that distant shore?
And we, poor little bundle of memories,
Shall we be treasured no more?"

O dear little bundle of letters,
Tho' you are faded and old,
To me you're as priceless a treasure
As a bundle of jewels and gold.

For golden are memory's treasures
And the love-beams that dart
Through your pages, I know, come from jewels
That sparkle and shine in the heart.

In the little old trunk in the attic,
I laid, then, away with a sigh,
Not "faded, forgotten, old relics,"
But a treasure no fortune could buy.

To a Dandelion

*I found this little dandelion
Trying to mock the sun,
So I thought I'd pluck it,
And send it "just for fun."*

*I know it's very common,
And some are wont to say
That it is a dreadful nuisance,
But to me, it's sweet and gay.*

*Because it's always smiling,
It never wears a frown,
It's a plucky, little flow'et
That won't be trampled down.*

*The violet may be modest,
And the rose deck banquet hall,
But the smiling, plucky dandelion's
Moral's best of all!*

A Caravan of Clouds

*Across the desert of the blue
There moved, one summer's day,
A caravan of fleecy clouds
That came from far away.*

*I watched it as it moved along,
Laden with summer rain,
And speculated on the shapes
That formed the endless train.*

*There was a mammoth bird with wings
And breast of fleecy white,
And there were kings in robes of clouds
With crowns of golden light.*

*And there were arks and floats and ships
All rigged with mast and sail,
That glided in the heaven's blue
Along the pathless trail.*

*And there were wondrous forms and shapes
Of beast and bird and man,
That rolled along with solemn grace
In the magical caravan.*

*Steadily and on it came,
At a slow and dreamy pace,
Where, O where will its journey end
In the boundless realms of space?*



The Optimist's Song

*O, I heed not the pessimist's humor,
Nor his stories and tales of woe,
I'm always glad, I avoid being sad,
I'm happy wherever I go!*

*O, it's easy to make the best of things
If you don't grieve over the past,
'Cause it doesn't pay, and I always say
That the future is coming too fast.*

*So you see that I'm an optimist,
As decided as one can be!
Life gives you some bumps,—don't get in the
"dumps,"
But just come and join hands with me!*

YOUTH

*I know of a queer little spirit
That doth change like the weather-vane,
Blown by the winds of emotion,
Now thoughtful, now joyous ag'ain.*

*As strong and as wild as a lion,
Now gay, as the birdlings that sing,
Now modest and shy as a violet,
Now haughty and bold as a king.*

*Now angry, yet as brave and as noble
As the knights in the days gone by,
Now tender and kind as an angel
When someone in trouble doth cry.*

*Wayward and blind to life's follies,
Believes all it hears to be truth,
Can you guess, friend, of whom I am telling?
'Tis the sweet, loving spirit of youth.*

Egeria

*Twilight, when thy sweet presence fills the earth,
The dreams of the poet leap to birth,
The musician lists, and bends his ear,
Far in thy depths he seems to hear
A voice that is singing sweet and slow,
His soul responds and murmurs low,
Softly he touches the silent strings,
A moment's pause, and lo, the muse sings.
Only a dreamer, I too, feel
The charm of thy presence, I bend and kneel,
And kneeling there in the pale moonbeams,
A worshipper at the shrine of dreams,
I see the ages marching by,
In solemn stream before my eye.
Each with its poet, sculptor, sage—
And lo, they pause at the "Golden Age,"
A Grecian minstrel comes forth with
An ancient lyre and chants this myth:
"She was a nymph, fair of face,
Stately of form, with charming grace,
Who lived in a fountain and dreamed and played,
Until a youth to the fountain strayed,*

He told her of the gods above,
He taught her lessons of wisdom and love.
To her, more precious than gems or gold
Were the lessons he taught and the tales he told,
At the touch of his hand, at the sound of his voice
The heart of the maiden would leap and rejoice.
And, then, one morn at the fountain's brim
The smiling Egeria waited for him,
'Till rosy dawn had slipped away,
And noon, and waning day
Closed her faint eyes and sank to rest,
Egeria waited with heaving breast,
Then from the blackness of night's abyss
A weird, low voice was murmuring this,
'Thou waitest thy lover, O saddest of maids,
He is dead, he hath gone to the Land of Shades.'
A moment speechless, stunned, amazed,
The frightened nymph in the darkness gazed—
And then like a wounded dove, she fell,
Ah, the depths of that wound no tongue can tell.
'He is dead, he hath gone,' she cried in her woe,
Like the mocking of fate came back the echo.
From dawn's first smile, 'till the day had fled
Egeria mourned for her lover dead.

*Day after day, the sad nymph pined,
No source of comfort could she find,
'Till the gods looked down from their mighty
 mountain*

*And changed her into a rippling fountain.
And ever as thou wand'rest near
A fountain's bosom thou wilt hear
A song of sorrow and of pain
Burdened in this sad refrain:*

*'Lover mine, I rise to seek thee
 In the rising spray,
Each bright morn I hope to greet thee,
 Woe is mine each day.*

*As the fountain leapeth, leapeth,
 Just to fall again,
So my hopes have bounded upward,
 But to fall in vain.*

*As the fountain softly murmurs
 To the heavens above,
So forever shall I murmur
 My eternal love.*

*Lover dead, O I will love thee
'Till this fountain's spray
Hath been quaffed by mighty Phoebus
And the marble moulds away.' "*

*Fainter and fainter the minstrel seems,
He fades away in a maze of dreams.
His vision o'er, the poet sighs,
At last he closes his weary eyes.
The musician lies in the realms of sleep.
In his violin's bosom the muse slumbers deep.
Mine eyes grow dim, my head sinks low,
Sleep is conquering steady and slow,
But before I surrender I humbly pray
That I, just a dreamer, at the close of day,
May see again, 'mid the pale moonbeams
The spirits who dwell in the Temple of Dreams.*

The Holiday Spirit

*Now I have not a genius for poetry,
Like the masters of olden time,
But the joy of the holiday season
Has moved my soul into rhyme.*

*You're counting the days until Christmas,
You have your list written, I miss,
But just for a little, wee moment,
Please turn your attention to this:*

*The clouds send the snow down to cover
The earth that is barren and brown,
And the earth draws it closely around her,
While the wind is spreading it down.*

*E'en the clouds and the winds in this season
Are helping whoever they may,
For they, too, have the holiday spirit,
That comes with glad Christmas day.*

*For it isn't the gift that we offer,
It isn't just what we receive,
It's the spirit of God in the giving
That makes value, is what I believe.*

*So come with your boxes and bundles,
When you hear the gay season's call,
That you may have the true "Holiday
Spirit."
Is my Christmas wish for you all!*



A Modern Boy Blue

(With apologies to E. F.)

*His old tennis racket is covered with dust,
But staunch in the corner it stands;
His two little golf sticks are red with rust,
And his bathing suit molds in his hands.*

*Time was, when that old tennis racket was new,
And the golf sticks swung in the air;
Time was, when the bathing suit plunged in deep
blue,
Time was, when all were fair.*

*On September the first he had sadly said,
"I'll be back in a year, old boys."
And toddling off to his trundle bed
He dreamt of his pretty toys.*

*And while he was dreaming an alarm clock song
Awakened our little Boy Blue,
He got up just in time for the eight o'clock gong,
So little toy friends, adieu!*

*Aye, faithful to little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the grasp of a muscular hand,
And the smile of a sunburned face.*

*As they longingly wait the school-hours through,
They sigh from moon to moon—
As over long lessons does little Boy Blue—
"Gee, but I wish it were June!"*

The Stars

*The day is softly slumb'ring
 'Neath the canopy of night,
And like candles at her bed-posts,
 The little stars shine bright.*

*I sit in meditation
 That befits the end of day,
And ponder o'er those twinkling stars,
 So many leagues away.*

*Are they lights that shine from Heaven,
 Through the ebony walls of night,
To give the strength and the courage
 That we need in this earthly fight?*

*Are they those who have gone and left us,
 Souls whom God hath willed
To shine and to show the doubtful
 That his promise hath been 'filled?*

*Or are they merely planets,
 In the boundless realms of space,
That move in the solar system,
 With solemn and awful grace?*

*Are they—but why should I ponder,
And strive in vain to find
The hidden truths and mysteries
That belong to the infinite mind?*

*Enough, Lord, forgive my presumption,
O stars, that eternally shine,
Because thou art past human knowledge
Thou wert wrought by a Power Divine.*



Art

*You ask me what Art is,
And 'though it is mine
To know and love this treasure,
Alas, not to define.*

*In vain I sit and ponder,
For my struggling mind
Gropes at so great a subject,
And stumbles as 'twere blind.*

*But this is a dreamer's fancy,
As I feel it in my heart
I'll try with my pen to tell you,
Of this wonderful gift called "Art."*

*Methinks man's finer instincts
That reach toward the higher goal,
With the love for noble beauty,
Are the elements of the soul.*

*What is art but the instinct,
That strives with passionate love
To fill the world with beauty
Like unto realms above?*

*And down through all the ages,
Since Creation's flag unfurled,
The greater, nobler things have come
From Art, the soul of the world.*

To the White Carnations

*The poets may sing of the roses,
Queenly in bearing and hue,
Of the violet that peeps 'neath the grasses,
Kissed by the sunshine and dew.*

*Of the lily so pure and so fragrant,
Of the tulip that blooms in the spring,
Of the wild flowers tender and modest,
Joy to all spirits they bring.*

*But the sweetest and dearest of flowers,
Reigning as queens o'er the others,
Are these, the white, stately carnations,
Worn as the emblem of mothers.*

“Ich Liebe Dick”

*They stood in the hallway,
The guests had all gone
But Richard and Mary,
Who stood there alone.*

*“I love you,” he whispered,
In soft tones of glee,
“But what in return, dear,
Will you say to me?”*

*She waited a moment,
They heard the clock tick,
Then she laughingly murmured,
“O ich liebe Dick.”*

To a Child's Prayer

*Thy prayers, little darling, I know
Arise like the songs of a bird,
From the lips of thy soul
To the Heavenly goal,
And by the Master are heard.*

*Full of innocence, sweetness and hope
They rise to realms so fair,
As the birdling's sweet song,
Cheers the weak ones along,
So 'tis with me and thy prayer.*

*When the bird wakes at rise of the sun,
His sweet song he never forgets,
So remember to pray
At the break of the day,
And join the birds when the sun sets.*

*In winter when birds journey south
They sing the same song, O so rare,
For no matter strange skies
The bird sings 'till he dies,
And so let it be with thy prayer.*

Liberty, O Liberty

*When in some foreign despot's land
That trembles 'neath an iron hand,
Where hearts are weary, weak and sad,
Then, thou alone can make them glad.
With love my voice rings out for thee,
Liberty, O liberty!*

*Thou art a voice from heav'n above,
Thy meaning justice, peace and love,
Thou art the emblem of our land,
The ensign of this noble band,
And all shall prosper under thee,
Liberty, O liberty!*

Inspiration

*Oft' my soul reminds me
Of a little tree,
Bowed and bent by breezes
That blow across life's lea.*

*Anger is the north wind,
But when the storm is o'er,
The sweet breeze of repentance
Comes from a southern shore.*

*Gladness is the west wind,
Dancing in its mirth,
Strong from the east comes sorrow,
That bends the tree to earth.*

*God, grant my soul may broaden,
Grow upward like the tree,
And stand at the end, with the poplar,
Stretching its arms to Thee.*

The Chimes

*The chimes were ringing on Christmas eve',
In a belfry old and dim,
Now they played a carol bright,
And now a sacred hymn.*

*They all rang out in the highest glee
Till the frosty air was rent,
All but one, who did not join
In the tones of merriment.*

*There hung far back in the corner,
An old disfigured chime,
Who showed by his broken places
That he came of another time.*

*None of the young chimes knew or cared
Whether he rang or no,
He was the last of the dear old set,
Ah, but he missed them so!*

*His tones were the finest and sweetest then,
And surely notes so fair
Could not be mute forever,
When some of the chords were there.*

*Then when the others were quiet,
Out of the corner dim,
In accents soft and mellow
There came the Christmas hymn.*

*In awe the young chimes started,
For they thought he had no tongue,
And then in a gladsome chorus
Burst forth the old and the young!*

Lullaby

*The old moon is blinking,
As if he were winking,*

*Down at two eyes of blue,
The shadow-sprites creeping,
Come silently peeping
Into those eyes of you.*

*They will tremble and quake,
If they find you're awake,*

*So you must off to sleep;
And the old sand-man sighs,
Drops his grains in your eyes
'Till they begin to peep.*

*The little stars shine,
From the sky, baby mine,
And twinkle the long night through,
So while you're asleep,
They'll be there, watch to keep,
Like candles that shine for you.*

*The old wind is singing,
The baby-birds swinging
Up in the branches high,
From beneath mother's wing,
Does each wee, downy thing
Hark to his lullaby.*

*So harken and rest,
Little bird, on my breast,
And out on the dream-sea wide,
'Till morning's bright light
Parts the curtains of night,
Off into dreamland glide.*







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